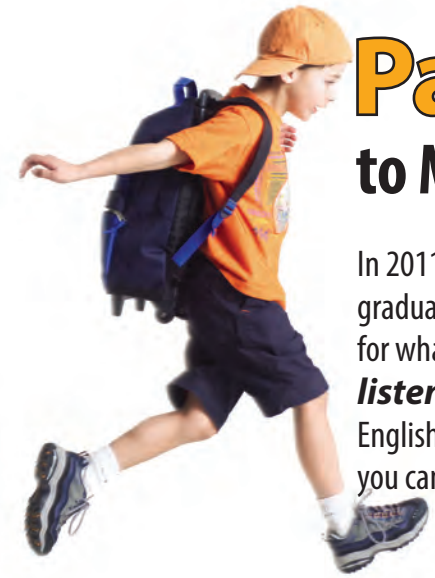

# Parent's Backpack Guide

## to Montana's New English Standards (Grades K-5)

In 2011, Montana adopted new, more challenging, English and math standards to ensure that all children graduate from high school with the skills they need to succeed. These standards provide clear expectations for what your child should know and be able to do in key areas: ***reading, writing, speaking and listening, language and mathematics.*** This guide is designed to help you understand how the English standards will affect your child, what changes you can expect to see in their homework, and what you can do at home to help your child in the classroom.

**For grade-by-grade resources, visit http://www.pta.org/4446.htm**

| What's changing? | What to look for in the backpack? | What can you do? |
|---|---|---|
| Students will learn about the world by reading as much non-fiction as fiction. | Look for your kids to have more reading assignments based on real-life events, such as biographies, articles and historical stories. | • Read non-fiction books aloud or with your child.<br>• Find ways to make reading non-fiction fun and exciting.<br>• Supply a series of age-appropriate texts on topics that interest your child. These could be books on people, events, or how and why things work. |
| Students will talk and write about reading using evidence from the text. | Your kids will have reading and writing assignments that might ask them to retell or write about key parts of a story or book. Look for writing assignments that ask your child to make arguments in writing using examples from the text that serve as evidence. | • Read aloud and/or read the same book as your child.<br>• Discuss what you read.<br>• Ask your child to provide evidence in everyday discussions and disagreements. |
| Students will know more vocabulary words. | Look for assignments that stretch your child's vocabulary and teach your child that "language is power." | • Talk to your children, read to them, listen to them, sing with them, make up silly rhymes and word games.<br>• Provide more challenging texts for your kids to read.<br>• Show that challenging books are worth reading. |

# Parent's Backpack Guide

## to Montana's New Math Standards (Grades K-5)

In 2011, Montana adopted new, more challenging, English and math standards to ensure that all children graduate from high school with the skills they need to succeed. These standards provide clear expectations for what your child should know and be able to do in key areas: ***reading, writing, speaking and listening, language and mathematics.*** This guide is designed to help you understand how the Math standards will affect your child, what changes you can expect to see in their homework, and what you can do at home to help your child in the classroom.

**For grade-by-grade resources,visit http://www.pta.org/4446.htm**

| What's changing? | What to look for in the backpack? | What can you do? |
|---|---|---|
| Students will have a deeper understanding of fewer concepts. | Look for assignments that require students to show their work and explain how they arrived at an answer.<br>Look for assignments that build on one another. For example, students will focus on adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. Once these areas are mastered, they will focus on fractions. You should be able to see the progression in the topics they learn. | • Know what concepts are important for your child based on their grade level and spend time working on those concepts.<br>• Be aware of what concepts your child struggled with last year and support your child in those challenge areas moving forward. |
| Students will "Really know it, really do it." | Look for assignments that ask your child to go beyond memorization of formulas and into learning the foundations of mathematics. | • Ask questions and review homework to see whether your child understands why as well as what the answer is.<br>• Talk about why the math works.<br>• Advocate for the time your child needs to learn key math skills. |
| Students will use math in real-world situations. | Look for math assignments that are based on the real world. For instance, homework for 5th graders might include adding fractions as part of a dessert recipe or determining how much pizza friends ate based on fractions. | • Ask your child to "do the math" that pops up in daily life.<br>• Provide time every day for your child to work on math at home. |